

## Early medieval religious-memorial monuments of gadabay region of Azerbaijan

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Gadabay situated at the western part of Azerbaijan Republic. There are many early medieval Christian temples, churches and monasteries which concern to Caucasian Albania in Gadabay region. This article is dedicated to early medieval temples and religious monuments of Caucasian Albania in Gadabay. It was researched Gadabay temple, Chaldash, Chanakhchi, Girdiman (Pir Javanshir), Agh kilse (White church), Ayrivang temples and Hamshivang monastery in last decade. These historical monuments established during early medieval period of Caucasian Albania. Early medieval religious situation of the country was largely studied by Azerbaijani Albanian scholars. As it is known from the sources, in the early Middle Ages the religious situation in Albania as a whole was extremely complicated. Thus, idolatry persisted, and Christianity and Zoroastrianism struggled to spread. There was a fierce struggle between their ideologues and supporters. The defense of Zoroastrianism by the Sassanids and Christianity by the Romans and then the Byzantines by all means that the inter-religious struggle went beyond the borders of the country. When thinking about the structure of the society that existed in the Gadabay region in the early Middle Ages, it would be more correct to refer directly to sources on the history of Albania. The study of early medieval archeological monuments of Gadabay region used ancient and medieval sources, materials of historical, archeological and ethnographic researches carried out in various monuments, samples of material culture kept in museums, funds and private collections. As it is known, the works of Strabo, Ptolemy, Kirokos Ganjali and especially the Albanian historian M. Kalankatuklu provide very valuable information about the history of Albania. Of course, the study of all this in relation to archeological materials and in a comparative manner is great scientific importance. M. Kalankatuklu states that during the reign of the Albanian Tsar Arsvagen and Prince Khurs of Girdiman, "there are still pagans left in Girdiman". At that time, Christianity was already widespread in the country.

**Keywords:** temple, church, monastery, Gadabay, Caucasian Albania, Christianity, Azerbaijan, memorial

## Ранньосередньовічний релігійно-меморіальні пам'ятники Азербайджанського регіону

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Гадабай, розташований у західній частині Азербайджанської Республіки. У регіоні Гадабай є багато ранньосередньовічних християнських храмів, церков і монастирів, які стосуються Кавказької Албанії. Ця стаття присвячена ранньосередньовічним храмам та релігійним пам'ятникам Кавказької Албанії в Гадабай. В останнє десятиліття було досліджено храм Гадабай, Чалдаш, Чанахчі, Гірдіман (Пір Джаваншир), Аг кілсе (Біла церква), храми Айріванг та монастир Хамшиванг. Ці історичні пам'ятники встановлені в ранньосередньовічний період Кавказької Албанії. Ранньосередньовічне релігійне становище країни значною мірою вивчалось азербайджанськими албанськими вченими. Як відомо з джерел, у ранньому Середньовіччі релігійна ситуація в Албанії загалом була надзвичайно складною. Таким чином, ідолопоклонство зберігалось, і християнство та зороастризм намагались поширитись. Між їх ідеологами та прихильниками йшла жорстока боротьба. Захист зороастризму сасанідами та християнства римлянами, а потім і візантійцями неодмінно сприяє тому, що міжрелігійна боротьба вийшла за межі країни. Думаючи про структуру суспільства, яка існувала в регіоні Гадабай у ранньому Середньовіччі, правильніше було б звертатися безпосередньо до джерел з історії Албанії. При вивченні ранньосередньовічних археологічних пам'яток регіону Гадабай використовувались античні та середньовічні джерела, матеріали історичних, археологічних та етнографічних досліджень, що проводились у різних пам'ятниках, зразки матеріальної культури, що зберігаються в музеях, фондах та приватних колекціях. Як відомо, праці Страбона, Птоломея, Кірокоса Гянджалі та особливо албанського історика М. Каланкатуклу дають дуже цінну інформацію про історію Албанії.

Звичайно, вивчення всього цього стосовно археологічних матеріалів та у порівняльній формі має велике наукове значення. М. Каланкатуклу стверджує, що за часів правління албанського царя Арсвагена та принца Хурда з Гірдімана «в Гірдімані ще залишились язичники». На той час християнство було вже широко поширеним у країні.

**Ключові слова:** храм, церква, монастир, Гадабай, Кавказька Албанія, християнство, Азербайджан, меморіал

## Раннесредневековые религиозно-мемориальные памятники гадабайской области Азербайджана

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Кедабек расположен в западной части Азербайджанской Республики. В районе Кедабек есть много раннесредневековых христианских храмов, церквей и монастырей, относящихся к Кавказской Албании. Статья посвящена раннесредневековым храмам и религиозным памятникам Кавказской Албании в Кедабеке. За последнее десятилетие были исследованы храмы Кедабек, Чалдаш, Чанахчи, Гирдиман (Пир Джаваншир), Аг клсе (Белая церковь), храмы Айриван и монастырь Хамшиванг. Эти исторические памятники созданы в раннесредневековый период Кавказской Албании. Раннесредневековая религиозная ситуация в стране широко изучалась азербайджанскими албанскими учеными. Как известно из источников, в раннем средневековье религиозная ситуация в Албании в целом была чрезвычайно сложной. Таким образом, идолопоклонство сохранялось, а христианство и зороастризм боролись за распространение. Между их идеологами и сторонниками шла ожесточенная борьба. Защита зороастризма сасанидами и христианства римлянами, а затем и Византией всеми средствами, чтобы межрелигиозная борьба вышла за пределы страны. Размышляя о структуре общества, существовавшего в районе Кедабека в раннем Средневековье, правильнее было бы напрямую обратиться к источникам по истории Албании. При изучении раннесредневековых археологических памятников Кедабекского района использовались древние и средневековые источники, материалы исторических, археологических и этнографических исследований, проведенных на различных памятниках, образцы материальной культуры, хранящиеся в музеях, фондах и частных коллекциях. Как известно, труды Страбона, Птолемея, Кирокоса Ганджали и особенно албанского историка М. Каланкатуклу дают очень ценную информацию об истории Албании. Конечно, изучение всего этого в сравнении с археологическими материалами имеет большое научное значение. М. Каланкатуклу утверждает, что во время правления албанского царя Арсвагена и князя Хурса Гирдиманского «в Гирдимане еще остались язичники». В то время в стране уже было распространено христианство.

**Ключевые слова:** храм, церковь, монастырь, Кедабек, Кавказская Албания, христианство, Азербайджан, мемориал

### Introduction:

Like other regions of Caucasian Albania, the territory of Gadabay region is very abundant with early medieval monuments, including religious-memorial monuments. Each monument is a kind of painting of the period to which it belongs. Therefore, along with the time of the monument's creation, the purpose of its creation should be clarified. Apart from some random findings, the monuments of the early Middle Ages in the Gadabay region have not been studied seriously and regularly until recently,

and no serious excavations have been carried out for this purpose.

Early medieval religious situation of the country was largely studied by Azerbaijani Albanian scholars. As it is known from the sources, in the early Middle Ages the religious situation in Albania as a whole was extremely complicated. Thus, idolatry persisted, and Christianity and Zoroastrianism struggled to spread. There was a fierce struggle between their ideologues and supporters. The defense of Zoroastrianism by the Sassanids and Christianity by the Romans and then the Byzantines by all

means that the inter-religious struggle went beyond the borders of the country.

When thinking about the structure of the society that existed in the Gadabay region in the early Middle Ages, it would be more correct to refer directly to sources on the history of Albania. The study of early medieval archeological monuments of Gadabay region used ancient and medieval sources, materials of historical, archeological and ethnographic researches carried out in various monuments, samples of material culture kept in museums, funds and private collections. As it is known, the works of Strabo, Koryu, Yeghishe, Sebeos, Lazar Parpetsi and especially the Albanian historian M. Kalankatuklu provide very valuable information about the history of Albania. Of course, the study of all this in relation to archeological materials and in a comparative manner is great scientific importance.

From this point of view, M. Kalankatli's work "Albanian history" is a richer source. The third part of M. Kalankatli's "History of Albania", consisting of 23 chapters, is devoted to the relationship between the Albanian and Gregorian churches; it provides material on the laws and decisions of the Albanian churches, reflecting the centuries-old struggle of those churches. M. Kalankatuklu states that during the reign of the Albanian Tsar Arsvagen and Prince Khurs of Girdiman, "there are still pagans left in Girdiman" (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 33). At that time, Christianity was already widespread in the country.

Discussion: The spread of Christianity was met with strong opposition from pagans almost everywhere. It is also known from historical sources that the apostle Elysee, who began to propagate Christianity in the territory of Albania in the 1st century and managed to build a temple in Kish for this purpose, was killed by Albanian pagans (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 18). Nevertheless, since the beginning of the 4th century, the spread of Christianity in the country has resumed. It is clear from M. Kalankatuklu's notes that already in the 30s of the IV century in Albania there was an independent Catholicosate and nine bishops. The Albanian tsar Urnayr paid special attention to the propagation and spread of the new religion. This, of course, was in the interests of the ruling class. In other words, unlike paganism, Christianity was the dominant religious ideology and provided a reliable

guarantee for the protection of the interests of the feudal lords. Therefore, Albanian rulers and feudal lords were interested in building temples throughout the country to ensure the spread of Christianity. During the reigns of the Albanian rulers Urnayr (IV century), Vache I (second half of V century), Vachagan III (late V century – early VI century), Javanshir (636-681), the country was divided into provinces, cities and towns. This is evidenced by the construction of numerous temples in large settlements.

M. Kalankatuklu writes that Israel ordered the Huns to untie their guardians and throw them on the ground, and then broke the images of the golden dragon, made a cross out of them, threw coins into the fire, and destroyed the Hun temples. Christian propagandists sought to build early Christian temples in pagan shrines or to convert them into Christian temples by carrying out certain reconstruction in the construction of pagan temples in accordance with Christian religious norms (Mammadova, 2004, p. 34).

According to M. Kalankatuklu, at the beginning of the 4th century, Christianity became the state religion in Uti, as in the whole country. There were two large and important dioceses. These are the dioceses of Barda and Girdiman (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 176).

According to historical information, Vachagan III built as many churches as there were days in a year. It can be assumed that many Christian temples in the Gadabay region began to function at that time. Christian temples were built in early medieval period, mainly in the form of basilicas, arched halls, and in some cases circular buildings. Since the early medieval Albanian architecture was nourished by the traditions of ancient Albanian architecture, the emergence of simple or complex variants of Christian monuments was not due to a gradual chronological process, but to the importance of any building, where it was not built, and construction costs (Khalilov, 2011, p. 84). Speaking of Christian monuments in the Middle East, A. L. Jacobson points out that at the same time, magnificent temples with three naves were built in cities, and simple, small temples with naves were built in villages (Jacobson, 1985, p. 17).

In the early days, architects did not think that temples were beautiful. Early Christian temples usually had few narrow windows and were poorly lit. The random nature of the windows

in such temples, in our opinion, also served to better protect the temple from armed attack. The relatively high persecution of Christians in the early days necessitated the strengthening of the defenses of the temples (Khalilov, 2011, p. 85).

Gadabay temple. The temple was built 3 kilometers from Gadabay, in the forest. The temple stretches from east to west. The length of the temple is 8.8 m, and 7.1 m in the south-north direction. Apart from the eastern branch, the other branches of the architectural cross have a rectangular shape. On the central part of the cross, where the arms of the architectural cross intersect, there is an 8-tongue drum, and on the drum there is a dome, which has not survived to the present day. The temple is illuminated by windows on the east and south branches, as well as on the drum. There are two entrances to the temple in the northern and western branches of the architectural cross. The western entrance of the monument is considered to be the main gate of the temple due to its relatively large size (Fig. 15).

Gadabay church was built of basalt stones of different sizes. Lime solution was used as a hardening material. Plaster has been preserved in some parts of the inner surface of the walls. The thickness of the wall masonry is 0.95-1.20 m. Taking into account similar monuments, G.H. Mammadova attributed Gadabay temple to VII–VIII centuries (Mammadova, 2004, p. 78).

Mahrasa temple. On September 7, 2012, under the leadership of professor Arif Mammadov it was researched the Albanian temple complex "Mahrasa" which located in Gadabay region, the current condition of the monument, main and auxiliary buildings, area, etc. We have received a lot of information that allows us to comment on (Fig. 1–6). Known by the locals as the Mahrasa Temple, Madrasa, Prince's Tower and Albanian Temple, this historical monument is located on the left bank of the Shamkir River, in the Safgulu forest. Although there are currently no permanent settlements near the monument, the local population, which is engaged in cattle breeding, uses this area as a pasture. The monument is surrounded by hazelnut and cornel forest. The monument complex, located on an area of about 2–3 hectares, is surrounded by a high stone fence. Some of the buildings inside the fence collapsed and became completely unusable, while others were partially or completely destroyed.

The total length of the main fence, which runs from west to east, almost parallel to the Shamkir River, is about 85 meters. The thickness of the fence is more than 1 m. In the middle of the fence there is an entrance door (the length of the fence is 46 m on the west side and 36 m on the east side). The door is 2.4 m wide and 3.3 m high (Fig. 6).

This complex, also called the "Albanian Temple", is located from the main building of worship (Fig. 1–2), from the bell building (Fig. 4) and ancillary buildings.

The largest of the surviving buildings within the complex (Fig. 1–2) served as a common place of worship. This building was also used for general meetings and church meetings. The total width of the building is 12 m, length 30 m, height from the back and front sides is about 7 m, height in the middle (inside) is more than 10 m. The balcony (entrance) part of the building has a structure with 2 columns and 3 arches (Fig. 1). The inner part of the building has 2 tiers. There are 2 columns and 3 arches in the middle of the inner part. The width of the inner part of the building is 7.3 m and the length is 7.45 m. The width of the columns is 70 cm (0.7 m). The altar inside the building faces east (Fig. 3). The entrance to the building is from the south. There is a sign of the cross above the entrance door. It is felt that the ends of the cross are deformed for some reason. Because it is different from the cross on the altar on the balcony. There are inscriptions on the entrance door.

One of the main surviving main buildings within the complex (Fig. 4) is a tower structure believed to be used as a bell tower. This building also consists of two floors: 1) The first floor in the form of a square, the gate is on the west side; 2) The second floor with an 8-cornered, 8-column, dome-shaped 8-tongue prism-shaped bell tower. The entrance door of the building is 1.4 m wide and 2.1 m high. The width of the building (east and west walls) is 6 m, and the length (south and north walls) is 10 m. The height of the first floor of the building is about 10 m, and the height of the tower is about 4-5 m. The foundation of the tower - the walls of the first floor - are made of local rocks and river stones of different colors. The tower, which consists of eight columns, is built of baked bricks. The upper part of the columns consists of several triangular covers. Most likely, the church bell was placed in the tower.



The eight-arched tower where the church bell of Mahrasa is located is located separately from the main building (Fig. 4) gives reason to think that it was built later. The mausoleum was reconstructed and Christian crosses were added. However, it is interesting to note that in Albania, the symbols of the belief in the moon goddess remained both in the ornaments on the cross and in the wall decorations. The cross is depicted on the walls of the bell tower at a height of about 6–7 m in all directions. This image is made of a different material (soft white stone) from the stone material from which the building was built. On the stone, which creates the image of the cross as a whole, there are both cross symbols and the image of a winged angel and a symbol (swastika).

Inside the northern fence of the complex there is an adjoining 5 (five) cell-shaped room. Inside the complex there is a two-room auxiliary or farm building-like structure on the west side.

Interestingly, there is an altar in this complex (Fig. 5). It is said that people from the surrounding area came here to sacrifice.

The author of the book "Toponimics of Gadabay" B.Tagiyev writes a different opinion: "Mah" is a Persian word, meaning "moon". The word "Rasi" is used in the Azerbaijani language in the phonetic version meaning "Rasad". An observatory is a place where celestial bodies are observed. It is designed as "Mahrasa" for easy pronunciation of the word Mahrasa. It can be assumed that the temple "Mahrasa" is an astronomical monument called "Temple of the Moon" (Taghiyev, 2007). According to T.Hagverdiyev, who confirmed this version: "Although the Mahrasa monument became a Christian temple after the 4th-5th centuries AD, it has functioned as one of the magnificent temples of fire-worshippers since the beginning of the century. The scientific analysis of the word "mahrasa" also confirms this idea. The root of the word "mah" means moon. "Rasad means the place where celestial bodies are observed" (Hagverdiyev, 1998, p. 39).

It was concluded that this area was originally a place of worship for pagans, became a secret place of worship for Albanian Christians during the Arab occupation, and became the center of the Albanian Catholicosate after the closure of the Ganjasar monastery (Mammadov, 2014, p. 131). Thus, the temple of Mahrasa was one of the central temples of Albania before the

adoption of Christianity. After the conversion to Christianity, the temple of Mahrasa and other lunar temples in the area were converted into churches.

There are also large cemeteries around the Mahrasa temple complex. The history of the oldest tombs here dates back to the Bronze Age. There are many tombs from the early Middle Ages. At the end of the 19th century, V.Belk saw these graves and the monument on his way to Dashkasan on horseback near the Mahrasa complex, but did not touch it because it was inhabited.

Hamshivang monastery. The temple complex of the Albanian Church in Boyuk Garamurad village of Gadabay region is also known as "Hamshivang Temple" and "Bell Church". There is a bell tower on the left and a building of worship on the right (Fig. 7).

The Hamshivang temple complex is also a remarkable monument. The complex has been studied by architects (Mammadova, 2004, p. 111).

Architects found a cross similar to the Arsakh Albanian cross in the area of the Hamshivang temple. The Hamshivang temple dates back to the V-VII centuries. After its restoration in the XII–XIII centuries, it took its present form. Some sources say that it was rebuilt in 1634. The locals explain why this historical monument is called the Bell Church, which was once a huge iron hanging from the roof of the church. When this bell was struck with an iron, a squeaking sound spread around. In the 1960s, the church bell mysteriously disappeared. The villagers believe he was abducted. Crosses and patterns of different sizes were painted on the walls of the temple. It is said that this temple was once used as a caravanserai.

As in the Mahrasa temple, there is an eight-arched tower where the church bell is located separately from the main building (Fig. 7). The complex consists of a main worship building, a bell building and completely demolished ancillary buildings. Compared to the Mahrasa temple, this complex was more damaged. The fences of the complex were completely destroyed and almost lost. In our opinion, one of the reasons is that the monument is located near the village. The second floor of the tower of the Mahrasa temple was built of brick, but it was built of polished stone. The first floor of the tower is rectangular. The cover of the second floor is round.

The worship building of the temple complex is reminiscent of the Chanakhchi temple in its internal structure. There are inscriptions on some wall stones. It is strange that some of these stones were later placed on the wall. According to elderly residents, the suspects, who came to Gadabay from Armenia during the Soviet era, removed some stones. It is obvious that fresh cross stones were placed on the walls of the monument.

**Ayrivang temple.** The monument is located near the village of Ayrivang, Gadabay region, on a high forested hill on the left bank of the Ayrichay (Inekboganchay), the left tributary of the Zayamchay. Part of the roof and walls of the temple were destroyed. The building is 7.50 m long and 3.70 m wide. An additional rectangular ledge was built in the middle of the east wall of the rectangular temple for the church's horseshoe-shaped altar apse. Thus, the apical apse is placed inside a rectangular frame. The fact that the pastophories were built not on the sides of the apse, but on the west, north and south sides of the temple, distinguishes the Ayrivang type temples from other Albanian temples. Rectangular pastophories 2.60 m long and 1.15 m wide are completed in the east by a semicircular apse. The door, which is not very high, connects the corresponding pastophory with the prayer hall. The only entrance to the temple is in the middle of the west wall and opens to a later corridor.

The temple and corridor were built of coarse crushed stone of various sizes, as well as river stones, and lime mortar was used as a reinforcing material. The thickness of the walls of the temple is 1.10 m, and the corridor is 0.95 m. The window seats are borderless. The cornice consists of a row of rectangular stones protruding slightly. G.H.Mammadova attributed the Ayrivang temple to the IX–X centuries (Mammadova, 2004, p. 88).

**Bashtala temple.** There is also a temple in the area called Bashtala of Arigiran village, located near Ayrivang village. It is also called the "Church of the Beginning". It is a monument of ancient Albanian Christianity. Its architectural structure is clearly similar to the Chanakhchi temple. It has three eyes that reach a height of 6–7 meters. Facing stones were used in its construction. Decorative ornaments were widely used in the wall stones. Ancient inscriptions can be seen on the walls. The forest

around the monument is full of fruit trees. There are more pear trees here. The ruins of several monuments remain in the so-called Church Valley. Oghuz tombs, known for their huge face stones, can be seen around.

**Agh kilse (White church)** is located in the territory of Novoivanovka village, a few km from the village in Gadabay. Locals also call this monument "White Mosque" (Fig. 9). When the Russians came here, they called it "Mosque". The original name of the monument is "White Church". The 4th century historical church is one of the oldest Albanian monuments in Gadabay. Unlike other similar buildings, they are so called because they are relatively white. The White Church is built of local stones. Ethnographic symbols of the Albanian period are engraved on the stones. A large area with a mysterious beauty, where Agh kilse is located, has been declared an ecotourism zone.

**Chaldash temple.** Chaldash temple is architecturally very similar to Mingachevir, Govurgala in Aghdam, Garabulag in Goy-Gol, Kharkhaput (Meshali) temples in Goranboy (Fig. 10). The roof of the Chaldash temple was built in the shape of a dome. The dome-shaped roof is considered to be very seismically resistant (Mammadzadeh, 1978, p. 127).

In general, there are hundreds of religious and memorial monuments in the Gadabay region. More than 50 of these monuments are Albanian Christian churches and monasteries. Many Albanian Christian monuments are in good condition, some are partially destroyed. Many of the monuments require extensive archaeological research. Double golden churches in the mountainous area called Gizilkilsa in Chobankendi area of Gadabay region (Fig. 11) and the remains of the church in the area called Kohnagishlag of Soyudlu village (Fig. 12). The material and cultural remains known from and around the village of Vang indicate that there were settlements and necropolises in ancient and early medieval times (3). Church buildings surrounding the monastery in the area called (Fig. 14), the remains of church buildings in the Koroglu fortress in Galakend (Fig. 13) and so on. Such monuments are also poorly studied and should be studied.

**Girdiman temple (Pir Javanshir temple).** The temple complex is located in Gadabay region. The temple included in the complex is built of well-hewn square stones. The entrance to the

temple is located in the western branch of the architectural cross. In the northern and southern branches of the architectural cross, apsidal pastophores ruled. The temple is illuminated by open windows in the northern, southern and eastern branches of the architectural cross. The altar apse, located on the eastern branch of the architectural cross, is horseshoe-shaped and has four deep niches. On the outside, the walls are decorated with small semicircular arches. Inside the temple, large cubes were placed on the walls. According to R.B.Goyushov, the acoustics of the temple were strengthened by this method (Goyushov, 1985, p. 95).

Written sources say that this temple, which is often mentioned and discussed in detail, and where the gold jewelry of the Holy Cross of Jesus is kept, even the doors and windows are extremely luxuriously decorated (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 128–135). Albanian historian M.Kalankatuklu writes about it: "The wise Javanshir looked for a worthy place for Isa Khachi (Jesus Cross) and built a house of God for him in his native province, Girdiman fortress, and decorated it in honor of Jesus Christ" (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 128). According to the source, the Girdiman temple was built in two years. That is, according to M. Kalankatuklu, "After the expulsion of the caspians and the victory of Javanshir, the construction of a beautiful church in the name of God was completed within two years" (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 130). Academician Z. M. Bunyadov, referring to this information of the Albanian historian, assumes that the Girdiman temple was built in 661/662 – 663/664 (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 224).

After a very successful meeting between the parties, Javanshir returned to Girdiman province with pomp and circumstance and visited the house of the holy God. "He decorated the church with very expensive and delicate things and spent a lot of money. He invited artists and decorated the church with gold and silk from head to toe. He adorned the door of the sanctuary, which protected the light of the world, with silver and made patterns on it" (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 135). Unfortunately, the location of the holy house of God, Girdiman, built by Javanshir, is still unknown to science.

We can say that this monument was built by Javanshir, the ruler of Girdiman, in the middle of the 7th century and was used in the territory

of Albania until the spread of Islam, that is, until the middle of the 9th century. According to M.Kalankatuklu, after the victory, Javanshir took his Catholicos and his bishops with him and came with them to Vang (Temple), a day's journey from Firuz-Gubad. He built this tower far from the settlements, between the two provinces, so that both he and those who came here could rest here" (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 130).

R. B. Goyushov attributed all other types of domed temples, except for round temples, to the VIII century and beyond (Goyushov, 1985, p. 95). The name of the temple, in our opinion, may help to some extent to clarify its period. As mentioned above, the ruler of Albania, Javanshir, was engaged in the construction of Christian temples in the country (Kalankatuklu, 1993, p. 128). It can be assumed that the name of the Pir Javanshir temple probably reflects the name of the Albanian ruler Javanshir. In view of this, it is possible to speculate about the construction of this temple in the middle of the VII century (Khalilov, 2011, p. 137).

Chanakchi temple. This temple is similar to Mahrasa temple in terms of architectural structure. It also has magnificent columns at the front and arches that connect these columns from above. There is an ancient medieval bridge near the temple. The bridge will be two meters wide and up to 20 meters long. It is said that a bell was built under the bridge to inform the people about the level of the river, and the place still remains. The main temple of Chanakhchi is located about two kilometers from the bridge. Like Koroglu fortress and Maiden fortress, Chanakhchi temple was built inside the ancient Oghuz fortress.

The main gate of the temple was destroyed. However, three large rooms survived. The middle room is taller than the sides. The columns in the entrance door and their ceiling coverings are individually decorated with various ornaments and various wall decorations. There was a small stage inside that looked like a theater stage. Stairs go up to the stage from the sides. It is possible that the ruler was sitting on a rug on the stage, and the people he received were sitting below him. The area of the room is about 30 meters. The height of the walls reaches 5 meters. Chimneys are installed on the walls (Hagverdiyev, 1998, p. 73). Temples with and without altars were usually built on trade

and migration routes, in the courtyards of large temples, and sometimes as tombstones. According to R. B. Goyushov, semi-drilled circular joints belong to the period before surface circular joints (Goyushov, 1985, p. 98). Taking this into account, the history of the formation of semi-circular circles can be attributed to the V–VI centuries.

### **Conclusion.**

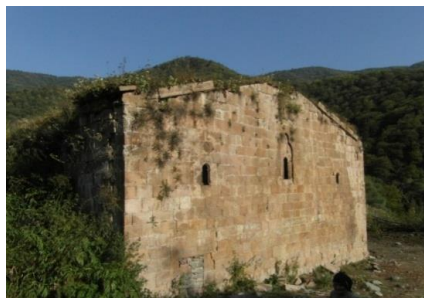
In the early Middle Ages, with the adoption of Christianity, the construction of temples began in the territory of Azerbaijan, and it was further expanded during the reign of Momin Vachaga III. Musa Kalankatli notes in his book "Albanian History": "Momin Vachagan built as many temples in the country as the number of days of the year." (Kalankatuklu, 1993). The recognition of Christianity by the state and its official religion in Caucasian Albania took place one year after the process of recognizing Christianity and declaring it an imperial religion in the Roman Empire. The Milan edict, which proclaimed Christianity a free religion, was adopted in the Roman Empire in 313 and applied in Albania in 314. The decision to make Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire in Nicaea in 325 was made by the Albanian state in 326. Thus, in 314, the Albanian tsar Urnayir raised Christianity to the level of the state in Albania and declared it the state religion in 326. However, as a result of the Arab conquests

in the 7th century, the development of Christianity in the plains of Caucasian Albania weakened. Thus, due to the weakening of the central government in the Caucasus Albania in the VIII century, one of the successors of the Christian-oriented Albanian state, Alban-Cambisena (Alban-Hereti-VIII-XI centuries), Alban-Sunik (XI–XII centuries) and Khachin-Albanian principalities (XII–XV centuries) replaced the other. In the 15th and 19th centuries, these principalities (kingdoms) also served as religious leaders of the Albanian Catholicos. The church system, which had a leading position in the Albanian statehood, did not allow the territory to be completely under the control of the missionaries due to its dependence on the Arab invaders. Thus, at first, the Arabs, who were mainly satisfied with the occupation of the plains, were satisfied with the collection of jizya (soul), a religious tax, from the Albanian Christian population living in the mountains. In general, the territory of Gadabay is abundant with early medieval monuments, as well as religious, memorial and grave monuments. Remains of large settlements, defensive structures and temples, as well as numerous necropolises indicate the densely populated area in the III-XI centuries, the level of economic and cultural development, multifaceted trade relations and the role of the region in economic, political and cultural life.



**Figure 1. Mahrasa early medieval temple**





**Figure 2. Mahrasa early medieval temple near Shamkirchay river**



**Figure 3. The interior of Mahrasa temple**



**Figure 4. The bell building part of Mahrasa temple**



**Figure 5. Sacrificery part of Mahrasa temple**



**Figure 6. Enter part of Mahrasa temple wall**



**Figure 7. Hamshivang monastery in Garamurad village of Gadabay region**



**Figure 8. Cross-stones in Khar-khar village of Gadabay region**



**Figure 9. Agh kilse (White church) temple in Novoivanovka village of Gadabay region**



**Figure 10. Chaldash temple in Chaldash village of Gadabay region**



**Figure 11. Gosha Gizilkilse temple in Chobankend village of Gadabay region**



**Figure 12. Kohnegishlag temple in Soyudlu village of Gadabay region**



**Figure 13. Christian temple remains in Koroghlu castle in Miskinli village of Gadabay region**



**Figure 14. Chanakhchi temple or Early Medieval Albanian Vang**



**Figure 15. Albanian Christian temple near Gadabay district**



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Цитування: Мехтієв, Е. (2020). Зміна уряду в регіоні Губи в Азербайджані та його трагічні наслідки (1920–1921). *Науково-теоретичний альманах «Грані»*, 23 (9), 92–103. doi: 10.15421/172087

Citation: Mehdiyev, E. (2020). Change of government in the Guba region of Azerbaijan and its tragic consequences (1920–1921). *Scientific and theoretical almanac «Grani»*, 23 (9), 92–103. doi: 10.15421/172087

Стаття надійшла / Article arrived: 29.09.2020

Схвалено до друку / Accepted: 30.10.2020